

WHEN GOD
IS THE BOSS

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I left the corporate world in 2003 and went into business for myself as a writer; within six months I expanded into publishing. As I began to surrender more of the business – and more of myself – to God, He began to shape it into a ministry. It became easier to give Him more of my time each day, because He was the One drawing me in. I began to spend a lot of time in prayer, Bible study, and just seeking His presence. It was also a time of emotional and spiritual healing for me; He led me every step.

After that time of healing, God told me I was ready to get back to work. I'd been working all along, letting Him grow my ministry. But He was ready to shift me into a higher gear. He wanted a new commitment from me. Little did I know that within the first ten minutes of us working together under this new commitment, He would ask me to write this devotional book. What I've gained from working with Him on this book has been so much more than I could have expected. It's been a time of restoration and blessing for me.

It is my prayer that whatever your circumstances – job, home life, creative projects, ministry – God will bring you to a new level of commitment to Him, designed perfectly for you, with love, by our Creator. I pray that He will speak to you through this book, especially through the Scripture verses included here, and write His plan for you deeply on your **heart!**

FIRST DAY OF WORK

EXPECT THE BEST!

MORNING MEETING

As a father pities His children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. (Psalm 103:13-14 NKJV)

It feels like the first day of a new job, and I am nervous! That's normal, isn't it? Especially when God is my boss! He told me the first thing He wanted this morning was a meeting in the "conference room" to set things in motion. Why am I so nervous? A meeting with God... That means prayer, doesn't it? I can do that; I do it all the time. What's so different about this?

But I see what's different. I've made a commitment to be all He asks me to be. What if I mess up?

It's a few minutes before meeting time, and I turn on some praise music. I've been listening to the same song for the past 24 hours. Casting Crowns – *Who am I?* I play the song as I wait for the meeting to begin. I feel His presence all around me, through me, His heart wrapped around my own. Why can't we just stay like this all day?

Finally it's time, and I turn off the music. I look to Him for the meeting to start, eyes wide; waiting.

He asks me to pick up the remote and sit on the floor in front of the stereo speakers. "Play the song," He says. "Listen to it until your fear is gone. Listen until you know Who I Am, and that you are Mine."

You're kidding! That's the agenda? That's the meeting? Oh, this is too good to be true.

That's exactly the point, isn't it?

God seems too good to be true. But He *is* True. He *is* real. He is everything He says He is!

He has me listen to the song over and over, as He fills me with His presence, as He writes His truth on my **heart**. The tension drains from me, replaced by His love. I am overcome with His presence and His peace.

Within ten minutes of worship, He's given me two writing assignments (one of which is this devotional book). Then He asks me to turn off the music and just listen to Him. Not for Him to say anything; just to be aware of His presence. To *experience* surrender. After all, as my employer, as my Lord, as my God, that's His only expectation of me – *to surrender*.

At the end of our meeting time, He gives me yet another writing assignment and reminds me: "We'll take this one step at a time, together."

As our meeting time ends and our writing time together begins, I have to ask myself: Why did I expect anything different? God isn't in the business of frightening or intimidating us, beating us up, setting unrealistic expectations. He wants *the best* for each of us – and He knows exactly how to make that happen. Our job is to be available, and obey. *To surrender.*

Father, thank You that You want the best for us – and that You want us to expect the best! Thank You for reminding us that worship is the key to knowing more of You. We praise You for showing us how to surrender all that we are to You, and to the work of Your Kingdom. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Do you expect the best from God? Why or why not? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you an area where your expectation is less than what God wants it to be. Ask Him to minister to you in that area.

In what ways have you invited God to be a part of your working life, or your daily tasks and projects? In what ways do you need more of Him?

What do you and God do together, as you start your day? Is there something more you can do to bring God more fully into your daily life? What is it? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you.

NOON BREAK

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the LORD.
“They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you
a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11 NLT)*

I remember my first corporate job in New York City. I was just out of school. I had some work experience, but not like this. Wall Street? Was I crazy? And working for the Japanese – diving into a whole new culture and language on top of everything else.

The train ride into the city seemed to take forever that first day. My **heart** pounded like the wheels on the track. What would my boss’s expectations be? What if I failed to meet them? I expected the executives to gather in the conference room at the end of the day and say, “We made a mistake hiring her.”

I had little choice, though. The economy was neck deep in a recession; almost no one was hiring new graduates. And I had bills piling up. I had to see it through.

By the end of the first day, I wondered why I'd worried. My boss assigned a co-worker to orient me, take me on a grand tour. The day seemed like a big social networking event. I was made to feel welcome, valued – without having done a thing! I didn't do any work that day, just watched as my co-worker did hers. I was free to ask questions again and again, until I got it.

Later my boss met with me and told me that my professional growth was important to him. He'd give me access to the resources and training I needed, to be whatever I aspired to be for the company. He said they needed me – just because of what they'd already seen. The rest would come with time. We'd learn how to work together.

I had it backward with my expectations that first morning. I started out expecting the worst of my employers and very little of myself. I feared their expectations of me. But what did they really expect? For me to be myself – nothing more, nothing less. And what should I have expected of them? And of myself?

Possibilities. A willingness to explore and discover the things that might come to be.

As I grew with that company for the next four years, I increased my expectations daily, and reached for the very best – for myself and for them. The experience was rewarding in ways I couldn't have predicted. God used every bit of it – good and bad – to shape me into who I am.

Father, thank You for showing us times in our lives when we've allowed fear to shape our expectations. Thank You for not giving up on us – for leading us to expect better! In Jesus' name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Can you think of a time when God turned your low expectations into a desire for something better? Describe what He did.

Look at a job you've had, or another situation in which you were able to grow. How did God do as He promises in Romans 8:28? How did He use good moments and bad to bring you to a new place in Him? Think of one good moment He used, and one bad moment; how did He work all of it together for good?

EVENING REFLECTION

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.” (John 14:12-13 NLT)

Jesus’ words here are a reminder that it’s not about us. It’s about something much greater – God’s plans for His Kingdom! When Jesus calls us to follow and serve Him, He’s got so much more planned than we can imagine. Much greater things for us, and for the people whose lives He will touch through us. Much greater things for the Kingdom! Best of all, He already knows how to make it all happen.

With His words, Jesus tells us to expect the best. Look at all He did in His ministry on earth. And we are to do greater things? Yes! *Because we have His Holy Spirit living within us.* Jesus Himself can work through each of us, doing the same things He did here on earth, over and over, daily, through us. And greater things! We only have to be available to Him, and obedient.

Does this mean it's easy to let Him do all He wants in us, and through us? Oh, there are definitely challenges. We bring so much baggage; how are we supposed to go where He intends to take us, dragging so much with us? But guess what! He already knows every piece of baggage we carry, and He knows how to help us give that baggage to Him, so He can get rid of it for good. What's the requirement for that disposal service? Once again: *commitment* ("I'm committed to You forever, Lord"); *availability* ("I am completely available to You, Lord"); *obedience* ("I want to obey You in all things, Lord").

Jesus doesn't tell us that serving Him will be without challenges. But weigh those challenges against the absolute promise He makes in the Scripture verse above: "*You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it...*" A promise like that makes every challenge seem worth it.

Jesus doesn't ask us to follow Him for the sake of mediocrity, or to stick a little toe in the water. He asks us to let Him work through us, so He can do nothing less than *build God's Kingdom!* He asks us to expect the best!

Lord Jesus, thank You for giving all of Yourself, so that we can know the power and love of letting You work in our lives, and through us. Help us to expect great works – Kingdom-building works! – from You. Keep us mindful that great works often come in small and unexpected ways. We love You, Lord. We praise You. Amen.

WRAP UP

Do you believe God is building His Kingdom through you? Why or why not?

In what ways are you available to God? In what ways are you holding back? How is God working with you in one of those areas, to help you surrender more? What has the Holy Spirit shown you?

Do you have excess baggage to give to Jesus? What is it? Are you willing to give it to Him right now? Ask Him to help you.

Re-read the three Scripture verses for today: **Psalm 103:13-14; Jeremiah 29:11; John 14:12-13**. Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

SECOND DAY OF WORK

I CHOSE YOU!

MORNING MEETING

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:1-3 NLT)

Yesterday I worried about God’s expectations of me as His “employee.” I worried that I wouldn’t be able to meet His requirements or live up to His challenges. Notice how effectively I managed to put myself at the center, instead of God. No wonder I was nervous!

Think about it: What did God really ask me to do? He asked me to show up; to commit that time to Him for work. That’s all He asked! It was my human mind that ran forward, making all kinds of conclusions. Wrong conclusions – things He never asked for.

Why do we love to complicate things and finish God's sentences for Him, and try on our own to fulfill His plans for us?

Think about God's words to Abraham. What did God really ask of him? He asked him to "Go." Yes, God foretold of things that would come from Abraham's obedience. But He never told Abraham to figure out how to make those things happen. They would come from God's hand. All Abraham had to do was "Go."

Look carefully at God's words in the Scripture verse above. What do you see? "***I will show you...***" "***I will make you into...***" "***I will bless you...***" "***I will make you...***" "***I will bless...***" Nothing in there for Abraham to figure out. God had it under control. Abraham didn't call on God to make these things happen. God called Abraham!

The first day of my new working commitment to God, I spent the time mostly working on projects He and I had already started together. I had very few new challenges or uncertainties to face. I got to do what I was doing already. The difference was a greater feeling of *joy!* and *blessing*; of *security* and *love*. A new sense of *enthusiasm!* and *commitment*.

Does that mean there won't be new challenges? Of course there will! God loves to move us outside our comfort zones and keep us there, where we are utterly dependent on Him. He loves to work in "impossible" situations and create results we could never imagine. He will use our willingness to the fullest for what He intends!

But all of the preparation and resources come directly from Him. *Always*. *He* will prepare us. *He* will provide. Whatever *He* asks of us, *He* will make it possible, and *He* will put the desire on our *heart* *Himself*.

God is not in the business of shoving us off a cliff and watching us fall. If He nudges us to take that step, even though we might see an abyss in front of us, we can be sure His hand is already there, to move us safely forward and carry us to new heights for Him.

Yesterday God started me working with what I know, with something familiar. Through this, He showed me He is in control. And He showed me that I can trust Him to move me forward into *new* areas, things I don't know but will discover, secure in His presence.

Father, thank You for calling us to "Go," to experience new life with You! Thank You for Your constant presence and provision. Keep us mindful that we don't have to know where we're going or how to get there. We only need to say, "I trust You, Lord." In Jesus' glorious name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Think of a time when God asked you to “Go!” Did you trust Him? Describe what happened.

Do you believe God will provide *everything* you need for the work He is calling you to do? *Every single thing*, at all times, no matter what? Is there an area where you struggle to walk out your belief in His provision? Let the Holy Spirit speak to you on this.

What kinds of things tear at your faith in God’s total provision? Will you give one of those burdens to Him right now? Which one? Pray right now and ask Jesus to lift it from you.

NOON BREAK

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” (John 15:16 NKJV)

When I was a student I took a temp job to help pay for school. I ended up working so many hours for the firm that they made me an offer as a permanent employee. My hours would be flexible around my school schedule, but I'd have more security and benefits and a higher pay rate. What a good deal!

My first day as a permanent employee... yep, you guessed it; I was nervous! I had made a commitment. To me, that commitment made it feel like things had changed, like more was at stake. What if I wasn't really who they thought I was? What if I couldn't do the job they wanted?

By the end of the first day, those fears were gone. Even though I was now a permanent employee, nothing about the job or the workplace had changed. The only difference was that I felt more settled, and my friends at the company were thrilled to have me as part of the team. They said my commitment told them they weren't going to lose me so quickly.

The work I did that day was the same as I'd been doing – the same work that made my boss want to hire me in the first place. I did it with a greater sense of enthusiasm and commitment. I felt a greater sense of reward. And I earned more!

I stayed with that company all the way through school, formed great friendships, acquired lots of skills and experience, and enjoyed every minute.

I didn't choose that company; they chose me. I didn't show up pounding on the door, saying, "Let me prove myself to you." Before they hired me, I was already part of the team. I already belonged, was valued; they wanted to keep me around. They created the opportunity and the space where I could do good work. It wasn't anything I initiated.

It's the same with God. We didn't come up with the brilliant idea to serve Him, or the ways to serve Him. *He did*. And He created each of us to fit uniquely in His Kingdom. We didn't choose Him; *He chose us*. We don't have to figure out the plan. He's already got it! We only have to show up and make the commitment.

*Father, thank You for creating each one of us uniquely, and giving each of us a special way to serve in Your Kingdom. Help us to remember, Lord, that **You chose us!** We love You, Lord. In Jesus' awesome name. Amen.*

WRAP UP

Re-read the Scripture verse above: **John 15:16**. What does it mean to you, that Jesus *wants* you to bear fruit, and *wants* your fruit to remain? Ask Him to really speak to your **heart** on this.

Do you believe God created you for a unique purpose in His Kingdom – a purpose no one else can fulfill? Is there anything keeping you from *total* belief? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with any area where you struggle to *truly* believe in your unique purpose.

EVENING REFLECTION

“Father, I don’t ask you to take my followers out of this world, but keep them safe from the evil one. They don’t belong to this world, and neither do I. Your word is the truth. So let this truth make them completely yours. I am sending them into the world, just as you sent me. I have given myself completely for their sake, so that they may belong completely to the truth.” (John 17:15-19 CEV)

If you don’t think God has things planned out for you to the last detail, read this prayer of Jesus in John 17; read the entire chapter. *Trust* Him: He’s got it all planned!

Nothing comforts and humbles me more than this prayer. As I hear the words, I feel like a child who sees uncertainty looming, a big change coming. Her parents talk quietly with each other. Their voices are calm, their words certain; their faith in their plan is evident. What child wouldn’t take comfort and realize, “I don’t have to figure this all out. They’ve already done that.”

It's the same when listening to this awesome prayer of Jesus. The Son talks to the Father, straight from His **heart** and Spirit, about all the things the Father has prepared for us. Jesus spoke to our Father about these things right before He died; He knew that His suffering and death would fulfill *all of it!* The eternal Kingdom of God was about to become a reality for all who believe in Jesus. Jesus knew it. He had seen it already, from the beginning. And through His words, He let us know it; *He let us see it!*

We do not need to have the answers. We do not have to figure things out. If you have trouble believing that, read this prayer over and over, until your **heart** and spirit know without a doubt what God is doing for each of us. In fact, has already done.

Through this prayer, Jesus assures us that His followers belong to Him, and belong to the Father, forever. He assures us that our Father's promise of eternal life, for all who believe in Jesus, *will* come to be. It isn't up to us to make that promise happen. God's already done it Himself. Through His words, Jesus reminds us that long before we were born, **God already chose us**. All we have to do is accept; He will do the rest.

*Lord Jesus, I am overwhelmed by Your love, every time I listen to the words You prayed for me. To know that You loved me – **me!** – before I was born. Your love amazes me. Help me to share Your love with those around me, every day; show me how, Lord. I pray this in Your perfect name. Amen.*

WRAP UP

Do you believe God has an abundant life planned for you? In what ways do you believe? In what ways do you struggle to believe? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see where you struggle, and why.

When was the last time you stopped to realize you are *just beginning your eternal life with God*? How does that make you feel? What will you do to keep that in mind, as you go about your day tomorrow?

Read John 17. How does Jesus speak to your **heart** through His prayer? Write what you feel, and what He shows you.

Re-read the other two Scripture verses for today: **Genesis 12:1-3**; **John 15:16**. Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

THIRD DAY OF WORK

I'LL SHOW YOU HOW

MORNING MEETING

“I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them or to take them upon you or to grasp them now. But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].” (John 16:12-13 AMP)

It’s occurred to me for some time now that as a writer, I hardly have the ability to convey the messages and visions God gives me. No matter. I may not have the ability, but He does! He knows how to use me to get His message across, in exactly the way He intends. All He asks is that I commit to Him; be available; and obey.

For that simple commitment, He gives back infinitely more. It’s not just a matter of my writing something and sharing it. With God, everything we do becomes a learning process, if we’re willing.

He will use each moment to teach us many things; to work in us, on so many levels; to nurture our hearts; to instruct our spirits. I might be writing to convey a vision He's shown me, but as I write, He is doing so much more within me. I am growing!

The Holy Spirit, living in each of us, is here to transform us into the image of Jesus; to make us new, through and through – exactly the way God created us to be! We miss so much when we don't let ourselves be teachable by the Holy Spirit; when we don't let God do all He wants in us, with every opportunity He gives us to learn and grow. *It's okay to grow!*

I think sometimes we struggle with that idea. How often do we hide from God's instruction and correction? We ignore what the Holy Spirit tells us, or we fear it. What if we get something wrong... and He lets us know?

Exactly!

That's what He's here for! To guide us, to correct us, to teach us. *How else will we learn?* How else can we become more like Jesus? The Holy Spirit doesn't correct us in order to condemn us. He corrects in order to bless us with a new life; to help us grow into the fullness of who God created us to be! He doesn't beat us up. We're the ones that do that – and we do it so well.

The more I listen to the Holy Spirit, the more I realize I don't have to know what I'm doing as a writer. I just have to be willing, and show up. If I start with one vision God gives me, and I know nothing beyond that... it's okay! He'll take me through it. He'll show me what to do next. He'll help me grow, so I can walk with greater faith in each new challenge He gives me.

And He'll use the opportunity to do so much more in me. It's not just about me writing a vision to share. It's also about what God is writing on my **heart**; the eternal life He's breathing into me.

Father, thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to live in us, to teach and guide us, to make us like Jesus. We know it's only by the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus, and His victory on the Cross that we have Your precious gift of the Holy Spirit. Help us to always love the Holy Spirit within us, and to spend each day getting to know Him better. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WRAP UP

How do you feel when the Holy Spirit convicts you? Think of a specific time when He corrected you on something you said or did. How did it turn out?

In what ways have you let God grow you? In what areas are you afraid or hesitant to grow? Why?

How do you feel about showing up for God, without knowing what comes next? Give an example of where you need to show up for Him right now. Do you trust Him? Talk with Him about it. Write what He shows you.

NOON BREAK

“Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:29-30 NLT)

The first job I ever took was in high school; it was through Junior Achievement. I was 16 years old, and I didn't have a clue what the two businessmen that ran our little “company” would expect from my friends and me. Why should I have a clue? It was my first job!

It's like anything we encounter for the first time – we can't already know what we haven't learned. Yet how often do we expect that from ourselves? And how often do we allow others to expect it from us?

Junior Achievement was a blessing: a true learning experience. Our business leaders were there to teach us, to get us acclimated to how a company functions, to give us some practical skills. I doubt they would have appreciated a 16-year-old walking in the first day, telling them how to do things, based on her “vast” experience. Fortunately that didn’t happen, nor did it need to. I didn’t have to know how to do anything. I just had to be teachable. And I had to be willing to step out and learn all I could.

That wasn’t something I could have gotten from school. I was an “A” student and expected to do well in every academic subject. I missed a huge part of growing up: I never experienced the joy of learning and growing. The pressure was always on to perform. Somehow I had to know *everything* going into a new class, a new subject. Class wasn’t for learning; it was for performance! School didn’t teach me how to be teachable.

But Junior Achievement did.

I ended up becoming an officer in the company – vice president of marketing. Our leaders made sure we had hands-on experience in building the product too. Each of the officers spent time learning something about the others’ jobs. It was a great experience, one that built my confidence and gave me skills that I carried forward. Best of all, I learned *how* to learn. I learned that it’s okay to be teachable; not only okay, but also necessary and desirable. God created us that way!

Thank You, Lord, for making us teachable, and for helping us to grow and learn Your ways. Help us to remember that we can't know what we haven't learned, and that it's okay to grow. We trust You, Lord, with our nurturing – and with everything! We love You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Describe a time when you experienced true joy in learning. What more did you “learn” from the *process* of learning?

Think of a time when God helped you learn something new. Who and what did He use to help you learn? How did He teach you? What happened?

EVENING REFLECTION

Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” (Mark 1:17 NLT)

Take a look at what God is doing here. Jesus is calling His disciples to a different way of life – a life of walking with Him, learning the Father’s ways, living His vision for the world and for the Kingdom. Reaching hands out to others and not letting go, despite the storms and trials.

It’s a new way of life for them, but if you think about it, is it radically different from their old life of fishing? They spent their days on the water, surrounded by the power and presence of God who created the universe. As fishermen, they had to learn His ways – the ways He set the wind and water in motion, the ways the fish moved. They learned from each other, from those more experienced. They hauled in fish that would bless others with nourishment. And they persevered to hang onto their nets and their catch, to hang onto their livelihood, no matter what.

Jesus was calling them to something new, but He presented it in a way they could understand, in a way they'd already experienced. Even those who didn't fully believe He was the Son of God... they trusted Him as a teacher. They had faith in the things He told them, and they believed He would keep telling them what they needed to know. They recognized the presence of God in Him.

What can we learn from Jesus' words to His disciples? God is showing us so much through this Scripture verse; but for now, consider this: *Jesus gives assurance when He calls*. He asked His disciples to step out on faith into something new. But He asked in a way that was familiar, not foreign. In His words, we see the assurance He gives – of His **provision**; His **help**; His **comfort**; His **promises**. He says to us, "I will show you how."

When Jesus calls, He doesn't just shout from a distance and turn and walk away, expecting us to run after Him. He turns toward us, meets us where we are, holds out His hand and says, "Come with Me." He goes out of His way to make it easy for us to say, "Yes." Most of all, He assures us of His constant presence with us, as we walk in the new ways He has called us to. He will not ask us to do anything that He won't show us how to do Himself.

Lord Jesus, we thank You that when You call us to follow, You hold out Your hand and meet us where we are. We thank You that whatever You ask us to do, You will show us how to do it. We know that walking with You is the greatest blessing in our life, and we praise You for all that You are. Thank You, Jesus! We love You. Amen.

WRAP UP

Do you truly believe that as you follow Jesus and grow in Him, He will *keep* showing you what you need to know? Describe one area where that belief isn't as strong as it could be. Why? Ask the Holy Spirit about this.

Describe a time when God called you to something new. How did He carry you through it?

Is there a situation in your life right now where you need assurance from Jesus? What is it? Do you believe He'll meet you where you are? Will you talk with Him about it right now? Write what He tells you.

Re-read the three Scripture verses for today: **John 16:12-13; Matthew 11:29-30; Mark 1:17**. Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

FOURTH DAY OF WORK

TALK TO ME

MORNING MEETING

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us... (Ephesians 3:20 NIV)

When I made this new working commitment to God, one of the first things I wondered, from my human perspective, was this: *How long can I keep this going before the world gets in the way?* Things seemed to be going too smoothly – not like any working situation I’d ever experienced. It seemed too good to be true. God seemed too powerful, too perfect.

And so He is!

I needed Him to write that on my **heart**.

The moment those human thoughts entered in, God reminded me that I didn’t have to worry how I would keep things going; that was not my job. *He* would keep things going. All I had to do was keep showing up, keep obeying... and come to Him when anything of the world got in the way.

“Talk to Me,” He said. *“Just talk to Me.”*

I think that's the first time I realized what this new working commitment means. It's not just about my commitment to Him; it's also about *His commitment to me*. He is here for us; He stands with us. When something goes wrong, He will lift us up, if we just ask. We can come to Him with every little thing – and every big thing, no matter what it is.

We need to keep aware of His constant presence with us, of the relationship we're in with Him. His commitment to us is beyond anything we can comprehend; but as we bring our needs to Him one by one, we start to understand, with our hearts, *all* that He is for us.

It's through His Holy Spirit, living in us, that we learn to be aware – quickly – when things start to go wrong. It's through the Holy Spirit that we learn the discipline to bring things to our Father quickly, so He can intervene.

Just a few days into this new working commitment, things did start to go terribly wrong. The enemy launched an assault on a publishing project, and used my own emotional triggers to beat me black and blue. Only the power of the Cross could stop it and set things right – really, really right!

There was a time I would have endured a whole lot more of the onslaught before bringing it to God. This time, I went right to Him. I took Him at His word: "*Talk to Me.*" And I talked. I really talked... mostly about how I didn't have a clue what to say or do, but I needed Him. Desperately. Immediately.

The Holy Spirit led me to ask for prayer support. He prompted me to stand, in a situation where I'd rather have run. He helped me be able to depend utterly on God, to believe (*truly, with my heart this time*) in His power and Presence, and to *expect* His intervention to set everything right.

And yes, God intervened – beyond anything I could have asked for or imagined. And He did it immediately.

Not only did He command the storm to cease. He also brought restoration and strength into the battered project and into the lives of those involved. He used my awareness of my emotional triggers to bring even deeper healing into my life. Then He began a massive outpouring of blessings I never expected!

God's commitment to us is awesome beyond comprehension. And when He says, "Talk to Me" – **He means it!**

Father, thank You that when You say, "Talk to Me" – you mean it! Thank You that You love us so much, You want to be a part of every detail of our life, and that You want to intervene when life gets in our way and distracts us from You. Thank You for Your faithfulness, which is perfect beyond anything we can understand. In Jesus' perfect name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Are there things you hesitate to bring to God, because they're "too big" or "too small"? Name a few. Are you willing to bring one of those to God right now? Go ahead... talk to Him now.

Think of a time when you experienced God's intervention during a tough moment. What happened? How did He grow your faith?

Do you bring your frustrations and stresses immediately to God? In *every* situation? What steps can you take to get into the habit of going to Him first in situations where you've hesitated? Ask the Holy Spirit to help you with this.

NOON BREAK

But Jesus replied, “Why are you so afraid? You surely don’t have much faith.” Then he got up and ordered the wind and the waves to calm down. And everything was calm. (Matthew 8:26 CEV)

The last corporate job I had was the best. It ended with tough times for all of us, culminating in a layoff for the entire department. But the experience was worth it.

It was a new kind of job for me, one that began way out of my comfort zone. It was a job where, during the interview process, I got brave and said, “I want more. I can do more.” Somehow they believed me, and hired me.

My first day on the job, my boss called me into his office to go over some things. He said if any problems came up, no matter how little or big, his door was always open; I should feel free to talk with him, no matter what. Employers always say things like that, but it was seldom my experience that they meant it. Somehow, I knew this time was different; I knew he meant it.

I wasn't a week into the new job when trouble started. The company was in the middle of a merger, so things were unsettled, egos flared, and any sense of organization and planning had long since gone out the 40th floor window. Part of my job was to help us move forward; lots of people didn't want to move forward.

Conflicts were bad; backstabbing, betrayals... all that stuff. Hours upon hours wasted in meetings that turned into brawls. Papers, emails, voice mails traded back and forth to no end, accomplishing nothing but heightened tension. Yet I knew the work I was charged with, and I knew I needed to do it.

I went to my boss a lot in those early days. I took him at his word. He said, "Talk to me" and I did, often. Outside his office I walked on eggshells; but when he and I talked, I was candid. Nothing would get done by pretending the conflicts weren't there. More information, more honesty... that's what he needed, so he could intervene effectively. And he needed my willingness to stick it out, to believe the best would come.

It's amazing what grew out of that uncertain time. I saw intractable conflicts resolved, broken relationships restored, determination to keep moving forward, and a department that, for a while, ran smoothly and achieved excellence. Finally the world got in the way, beyond what we could have foreseen, and things came to an end. That didn't diminish what we had for a while, or what that experience taught me.

Even now, God is using the memory of that time to instruct me: To remind me of the power of His intervention in “impossible” situations; of His restoration; of His love. And to show me the power of faith, of belief in Him so strongly that we can keep walking through the storms, knowing He is here; knowing He is in control; knowing that on the other side is *blessing!*

The key to His intervention is one He has given to each of us: “Talk to Me.”

Right now. Don’t wait.

Father, we thank You for Your intervention when we bring our “impossible” situations to you. We thank You for the restoration You bring. We know You’ve made this possible by the sacrifice of Your Son, Jesus. We know You are always here to talk with us; help us not to hesitate or take that for granted. Thank You, Lord. We love You. In Jesus’ Mighty and Ever-Present Name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Describe an “impossible” situation you’ve experienced – in work, in life. Did you ask God to intervene? What happened?

Is there something you need to talk to God about right now? Don’t wait! Talk to Him.

EVENING REFLECTION

“All of you must keep awake (give strict attention, be cautious and active) and watch and pray, that you may not come into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41 AMP)

It seems I’ve heard the words of this Scripture verse thousands of times. How many times have I failed to do as Jesus commands?

No matter how diligent I think I am in prayer, I get blindsided. It’s seldom from the big things, like a meteor crashing out of the sky. Most often, it’s the little things. They rip the ground out from under me, and the devastation is no different than a meteor crash. Clearly, my “alertness net” is not as tightly woven as it should be. There are loose places for little things to get through.

I think it’s too easy to read this Scripture verse and focus only on big areas of temptation. But what is temptation? Is it not *anything* that distracts us from God?

Like the biting remark someone made in passing; the critical look. *The whisper of doubt* – we hear it for a second, but if we don't cast it out, it sticks; melts quietly into our heart, making fertile ground for more doubts to crawl in and stay, to grow into something that is not of God. We give in to the temptation to react, on our own, to the little things that tear our heart from Him, rather than taking these things immediately to the Cross.

We live in a world so thick with temptation that we breathe it all day long. We can't avoid it; nor does God ask us to. But we *can* avoid letting it stick! This means greater awareness through the Holy Spirit; and a willingness to move quickly, to take little things to God immediately, before they grow into big things.

Jesus tells us to keep alert and pray. Prayer is communication with God. Prayer is an expression of our desire for His presence in our lives; His intervention; His consuming love. It's our life-giving connection with Him. It's what allows Him to do all that we need, to give all that He wants for us, beyond our wildest expectations. *Prayer is life* – the life *He* has planned for each of us. “*Talk to Me.*”

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us the importance of prayer, of staying alert to even the littlest temptations that threaten to distract us from You. Help us to stay prayerful, through Your Holy Spirit. Thank You for loving us so much that You came into the world to teach us our Father's ways, and to die so that we will live with You and our Father forever. We love You, Jesus. Amen.

WRAP UP

What are some of the *littlest* things that tempt you and distract you from God? Will you ask the Holy Spirit right now to help you in one of those areas? Which one?

Do you stay prayerfully connected to God throughout the day? What can you do to deepen your connection with Him? Have you asked Him? No matter what your prayer life is like, talk with Him about it right now. Write what He tells you.

Do you believe God's door is open to you, whenever you need to talk to Him? Why or why not? Do you understand how much He wants to talk with you? Will you let Him speak to your **heart** on this? Ask Him to!

Re-read the three Scripture verses for today: **Ephesians 3:20; Matthew 8:26; Matthew 26:41**. Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

FIFTH DAY OF WORK

I'LL MAKE IT WORK

MORNING MEETING

O LORD, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. (Isaiah 25:1 NKJV)

Sometimes I forget that when God asked me to make this new commitment to Him, it's because *He* was already committed to me – long before I was born. What do you do with an understanding like that? How do you let it sink in?

Because of my New York corporate background, I was used to working in an environment where the “rules” are set by everyone but God. Personal agendas, ambitions, insecurities – these get in the way of what *might* be, if we let God take over our daily working life. I was blessed with co-workers who supported each other; but I also saw co-workers turn quickly against each other, whenever the “rules” changed.

God doesn't change. His laws are absolute. He is faithful. *Always.* He is *for* you.

God called me into the ministry He gave me, because He had a purpose for it – a purpose that goes beyond anything I can understand or imagine. He planned it from the beginning. He intends that it will move forward and grow – not necessarily in the ways I might expect, but always according to His perfect plan. Whatever He asks me to do in this ministry, He intends for it to happen. If I obey what He asks, *He will make it happen.*

Whatever God calls you to do, whether it has to do with family or job or creative projects or ministry... He *wants* you to succeed with all that He asks of you. He has the ability to make it happen. *He desires to bless you!*

Remember that whatever God calls you to do, He is using it to build His Kingdom, according to His perfect plan. You are about *His* business, and this is serious business for Him. He's not going to drop the ball or pull the earth out from under you or change the rules. His commitment is beyond anything we can comprehend.

When God asks us to show up, He shows up too; in fact, *He's already there.* He carries the burden. *He's* going to make it work. We only have to be available and obey. Our biggest job is to continue to learn how to surrender. He will do the rest. He will make it work!

Father, thank You that we don't have to figure out how to succeed with the tasks You call us to. We don't have to worry about what comes first, or what comes next. All we need to do is show up and obey what You ask us to do. It's Your perfect plan – not ours – and we praise You for it! In Jesus' name. Amen.

WRAP UP

Have you experienced a work or group situation where the rules were set by someone other than God? Describe it.

How would that situation be different if God were allowed to be totally in charge? Describe what would change, and what things might be like.

Are you dealing right now with a situation where you're worried how to make it happen? Do you know what's causing you to worry? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you. Can you give that situation and that root of worry to God right now?

NOON BREAK

*Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
because His compassions fail not. They are new every
morning; great is Your faithfulness. (Lamentations 3:22-
23 NKJV)*

Have you ever headed up a project you really cared about? Something you did, not because you had to but because you wanted to? Perhaps something you created?

About ten years ago I went to Siberia as a volunteer teacher. I was sponsored by a group that was helping with educational reform in Russia and other former Communist countries. In addition to teaching and reform, we were given the freedom to start any community outreach project we wanted, as long as it was in line with the organization's purposes.

God put on my **heart** to start a particular project, and He brought lots of people together, lots of things into place to make it happen. I cared so much about that project. I lived and breathed it. I could hardly sleep, because there was so much to do, and it was exciting to watch things fall into place. My vision far outran my ability, but I didn't care; I kept moving it forward.

Soon the project got way too big, and I was running too far ahead of God and myself and everyone around me. I burned out. I was doing everything on my own steam, not letting God work through me, not listening to what *He* might have wanted. I have no doubt He led me to the project, but that's as far as I listened. I took off running.

God used this to teach me some valuable lessons. Not all of those lessons were about what I did wrong. Here's one lesson about something I did right!

From the beginning, the project was about people. That never changed. While parts of the project might have fallen through the cracks, the people didn't! I watched and listened; I did whatever needed to be done to help the people involved. I was committed. Everyone came out of the project with something more than they had going in – a sense of renewal, direction, confidence, belonging.

If I could do that out of my limited human capacity, running on my own steam, not trusting God with all the details... how much more committed is **GOD** to seeing us through the projects He brings us into? How much more will *He* nurture us and the work He's called us to do? How much more will *He* show up, and guide, and intervene to make things work – just as *He* has planned?

I burned out in Siberia, but God never burns out. He is forever, and He is faithful to see things through. He doesn't let details drop, or let people fall through the cracks. He orchestrates things perfectly, and gets us to where He needs us to be – something we cannot do on our own. He does this even when *we* mess up! He never tires, never fails to do what we need.

As the psalmist says, *“He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep... The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.” (Psalm 121:3-4,8 NKJV)*

He will make it work!

*Father, we praise You for Your faithfulness. If we, in our limited human abilities, can stay true to a project, how infinitely more are we assured of **Your** commitment to us, and to Your Kingdom! You do not fail, Lord, not ever. In Your everlasting faithfulness, we find excitement, comfort and peace. We thank You, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

WRAP UP

Describe a project you really cared about. In what ways did you show commitment and faithfulness? Does this give you any new insights into God's faithfulness? What are they?

When has another person's faithfulness to God impacted your life?
How?

In what ways has God shown His faithfulness to you? Give an example.

EVENING REFLECTION

Jesus once again addressed them: “I am the world’s Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in.” (John 8:12 The Message)

At the start of this week, God let me listen to a song during our first “meeting.” The song was *Who am I?* by Casting Crowns. Look at a few of the lyrics:

*Who am I?
That **the bright and morning star**
Would choose to **light** the way
For my ever wandering **heart.***

Have you ever thought about that? How *huge* that is? How extreme? We’re not just getting a flashlight to help us stumble along. We’re getting **the bright and morning star!**

Look at Jesus' words again, in the Scripture verse above. He is **Light**. He gives us light to live in, to do the work He's called us to do, to walk in *victory* and *blessings!* *He gives way more light than we need.* **Light, light, and more light!**

Do you ever feel nervous about the call He has on your life? Do you ever stop and think, "I have no idea what I'm doing!" I guarantee you this: **GOD** isn't nervous! Not for an instant! He knows exactly what He's doing in your life. He's not going to let you stumble in the dark. He is not going to take one risk with you. With God there is no risk. He is in control; He has the plan. And you are *precious* to Him!

Look how God goes out of His way to give assurance – His Word is filled with it! You could spend time with just the Scripture verse above, and His assurance would fill your **heart** to overflowing. We have a God who doesn't just provide. He also lets us *know* He's doing it, and that He'll *keep* doing it. He **wants** us to know; He **wants** us to believe!

Whenever you feel that you're stumbling with the work He's called you to, whenever a moment of doubt creeps in, **open your eyes!** You have **the bright and morning star** lighting the entire way for you – all that you need to see, ***all of it!*** If you can't see **His light**, ask Him to show you. It's all around you. He'll make sure you see it!

*Lord Jesus, thank You for being **the Light** of the world. Thank You for Your **abundance of light** that keeps us from stumbling. Thank You for Your precious Holy Spirit living in us, shining **Your light**, always showing the way. Help us to be **Your light** in all that we say and do – in Your name and for Your glory. Amen!*

WRAP UP

Think about the **abundance of light** Jesus brought into the world. How does it feel to know that **the bright and morning star** will **light** the way for everything you do? Write about it!

Describe a time when **the light of Jesus** shone brightly in a challenging situation. What happened? How did things turn out?

When did you most recently see **the light of Jesus** shining through someone? What was the situation? What did the person say or do to let **Jesus' light shine through**?

Re-read the three Scripture verses for today: **Isaiah 25:1; Lamentations 3:22-23; John 8:12**. Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

SIXTH DAY OF WORK

I LOVE YOU!

MORNING MEETING

I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. (Psalm 139:7-10 NLT)

“I love you.”

When have you heard an employer say that?

If they did – unless they’re related to you, or a close friend – there’d probably be a lawsuit. God doesn’t have to worry about lawsuits. He *is* Love – and He will not hesitate to keep telling you and showing you.

I’ve been working for God one week under this new commitment. I have never felt so loved! He’s gone out of His way to show me His love every minute of the day. Not because of the work we’ve done. Not because I showed up. *Just because!* Because He created me. Because He loved me before I was born. Because He *is* love!

I remember one time when I went through prayers of humility with God. I apologized to Him for ever thinking I was special. He quickly corrected me: *“You are special. I created you!”* Have you ever thought about that? Of all the infinite possibilities, the beings God could have given life to, He created **you!** Does that tell you something about how special you are to Him? How much He loves you? You are *His*, and you are precious! That’s exactly how He treats you, whether you want Him to or not; whether you’re aware of His love or not; whether you want to receive His love or not.

What if you really let Him **be** love for you – in *every* way He wants to be? What if you trust Him with *all of your heart*, day in, day out? What would you discover about *you*? About His plans for you? His blessings? What would you discover about *Him*? This week working for God, I have learned so much more about His **heart**, His love, and who I am in Him. I learned more than I ever imagined I could.

This morning as He gives me time to worship Him, before we begin our work together, He whispers, *“Know that every day can be just like this... and better!”*

Father, thank You that as much as we think we love You, Your love is infinitely greater. Thank You that You loved us enough to give us life – and new Resurrection life, through Your Son, Jesus. We love You, Lord. Amen.

WRAP UP

In what ways has God shown His love to you this week? Write down the ways that come to mind first, and then keep going, because there's more! *And more!* Will you take some time right now for thanksgiving?

In what ways have you seen His love through others this week? Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind some ways that might be less obvious. What are they?

In what ways can people see His love for them – *and your love for Him* – in the daily tasks you do? Give a few examples, or describe one in detail.

NOON BREAK

My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life. We are now God's children, and we know him. God is love, and anyone who doesn't love others has never known him. (1 John 4:7-8 CEV)

Think about a working environment where you felt loved. Was there a place that, no matter how crazy, no matter how stressful things got, you knew you didn't have to face everything alone? A place where God's presence was clearly felt, even in small ways? A place where His love was visible?

When you think about this, don't look for the things you normally associate with God's love. Look for it in unusual places or in quiet ways. Little things that make a co-worker feel special, noticed, understood; that give them a sense of belonging, of not having to face the day alone. God's love can show up on the job in unexpected and wonderful ways.

I remember when I was struggling through a crisis in my personal life. I was part of a Christian business and I dialed in to a company conference call. As I listened to the call, I was sitting in front of my computer, reading one disastrous email after another related to my personal crisis. Tough to focus on business matters in that moment.

A friend of mine was leading the conference call and knew the kind of day I was having. During the middle of the call, he sent me an instant message with *the* funniest cartoon character acting all crazy on my computer screen. I had to mute the phone because I was laughing so hard. In the midst of it, I could hear Jesus say, “I love you. I’m here. It’ll be okay.”

It still amazes me that my friend took the time – in the middle of a national business call he was directing – to let me know I wasn’t alone; that I was loved. He sent Jesus’ love to me through an IM cartoon. I will never forget it.

Father, thank You that You have given us infinite ways to share Your love with others, no matter what situations we face together. Thank You that You are always present with us, with Your love, even when we don’t notice You there. Help us to notice Your presence and Your love more often, in more ways, as we go through each day. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

WRAP UP

What small – and big – things have you done in the workplace to keep people going, so they knew they didn't have to face things alone? List a few, or describe a specific example.

Describe a time when you felt God's presence and love in a work situation. What did you learn from it?

EVENING REFLECTION

*“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Mark 10:45 NLT)*

God wants us in His Kingdom – *all of us*. (II Peter 3:9) He will *love* us into that place! He’s done all the work, given *everything* of Himself, to get us there. If we let Him, He’ll keep working through us, so that everyone comes to know Who He is, and that they belong in His Kingdom – precious, beloved, each one of them.

When you work for God, you’re going to know you’re loved. If you let Him, He’ll keep you aware of this throughout each working day. It starts with *you* – you have to expect it, be aware, look for it! *Look for His love to underline everything you do.*

He’s not here to condemn you, to beat you up. (John 3:17) He’s here to bring you abundant life! (John 10:10) Expect it! *Expect His love* in every moment! Every part of your working day – and of your life – *is enclosed in His heart*. Remember that! And remember to love Him back.

If you're worried about how to step further into God's call for your life, first take a step *back*. Remember Jesus as a servant – showing **YOU!** the way into His Kingdom; getting you ready; taking your baggage out of the way, and filling you instead with blessings and eternal treasures; and then taking your hand to *lead you to where He is*.

Remember His love. Remember **He IS Love!** Walk forward with His assurance of love in your **heart**. That's all you need. He will do the rest.

*Lord Jesus, Your love is amazing. Help us to not take Your love for granted, not for one moment. We ask You, Jesus, to grow in our **hearts** the desire to know more of Your love, and to explore our Father's infinite love with You! Help us to shine with Your love, Lord Jesus, and to appreciate the small and unique ways each of us has, to share Your love in the world. It's in Your wonderful name we pray. Amen!*

WRAP UP

When you think about Jesus coming into the world to serve *you*... what does that mean to you? Spend some time reflecting on this, and then write what you feel. Then ask Him what it means to *Him*.

Has there been a time, in serving, when you truly experienced Jesus' pure love? Describe it!

Is there someone in your working or daily life who needs more of Jesus' love? Will you pray for that person right now? Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer.

Re-read the three Scripture verses for today: **Psalm 139:7-10;** **I John 4:7-8;** **Mark 10:45.** Choose one of the verses and listen for what God is saying to you. Write what He shows you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

My name is Janet Eriksson. I'm one of God's kids, just like you. My heart belongs to Jesus. At 42 years old, I'm blessed with a brand new life that the Lord has given me. I'm involved in ministry to teens and to single women; prayer and healing ministry; and I'm working toward becoming a pastoral counselor through the United Methodist Church. I'm privileged to be working at [Eagle Ranch](#), a group home for teens in north Georgia; I'm a parapro at the Eagle Ranch School, and I work with the students in the writing lab. I am "wild and crazy," a kid at heart. I also love to spend quiet time with God, praying and writing what He inspires. I have a wonderful church family at [Dahlonega United Methodist Church](#), a Spirit-filled place of worship, fellowship, missions and outreach in north Georgia. At Dahlonega UMC, I'm active in intercessory prayer, [Elijah House](#), teaching youth Sunday School, community groups, and worship dance. I enjoy going on short-term mission trips. I'm also active in the [Georgia Foothills Walk to Emmaus](#) community and [Georgia Mountain Tres Dias](#). I enjoy coloring books and crafts and making prayer bracelets. I'd love to hear from you at jlynn.erik@gmail.com!

Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you." -- John 15:16 (NKJV)